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"OVER THE TOP"

By ARTHUR GUY EMPEY

An American Boy Who Got Into the War Two Years Before His Country.

CHAPTER II.

Blighty to Rest Billets.

The next morning the captain sent for me and informed me: "Empey, as a recruiting sergeant you are a washout," and sent me to a training depot.

After arriving at this place, I was hustled to the quartermaster stores and received an awful shock. The quartermaster sergeant spread a waterproof sheet on the ground and commenced throwing a miscellaneous assortment of straps, buckles and other paraphernalia into it. I thought he would never stop, but when the pile reached to my knees he paused long enough to say, "Next, No. 5217, 'Arris, B company." I gazed in bewilderment at the pile of junk in front of me, and then my eyes wandered around looking for the wagon which was to carry it to barracks. I was rudely brought to earth by the "quarter" exclaiming, "Ere, you, 'op it, tyke it away; blind my eyes, 'e's looking for 'is batman to 'elp 'im carry it."

Struggling under the load, with frequent pauses for rest, I reached our barracks (large car barns), and my platoon leader came to the rescue. It was a marvel to me how quickly he assembled the equipment. After he had completed the task, he showed me how to adjust it on my person. Pretty soon I stood before him a proper Tommy Atkins in heavy marching order, feeling like an overloaded camel.

On my feet were heavy-soled boots, studded with hobnails, the toes and heels of which were re-enforced by steel half-moons. My legs were incased in wooden puttees, olive drab in color, with my trousers overlapping them at the top. Then a woolen khaki

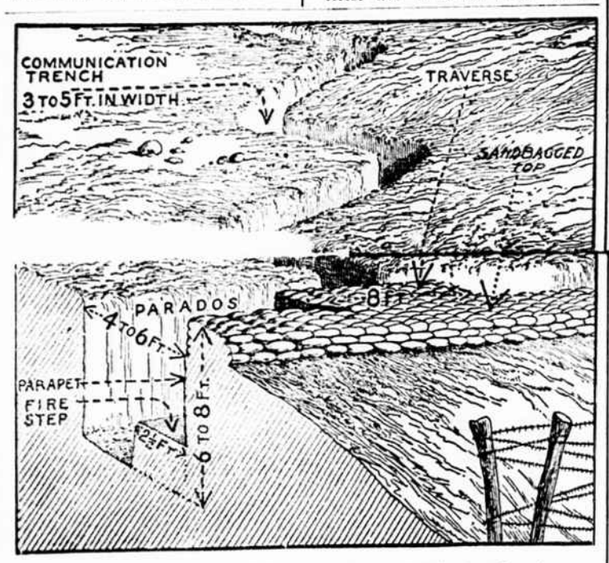

Diagram Showing Typical Front-Line and Communication Trenches.

tunic, under which was a bluish gray woolen shirt, minus a collar; beneath this shirt a woolen belly band about six inches wide, held in place by tie strings of white tape. On my head was a heavy woolen trench cap, with huge earlaps buttoned over the top. Then the equipment: A canvas belt, with ammunition pockets, and two wide canvas straps like suspenders, called "D" straps, fastened to the belt in front, passing over each shoulder, crossing in the middle of my back, and attached by buckles to the rear of the belt. On the right side of the belt hung a water bottle, covered with felt, on the left side was my bayonet and scabbard, and intrenching tool handle, this handle strapped to the bayonet scabbard. In the rear was my intrenching tool, carried in a canvas case. This tool was a combination pick and spade. A canvas haversack was strapped to the left side of the belt, while on my back was the pack, also of canvas, held in place by two canvas straps over the shoulders, suspended on the bottom of the pack was my mess tin or canteen in a neat little canvas case. My waterproof sheet, looking like a jelly roll, was strapped on top of the pack, with a wooden stick for cleaning the breach of the rifle projecting from each end. On a lanyard around my waist was hung a huge jackknife with a can-opener attachment. The pack contained my overcoat, an extra pair of socks, change of underwear, hold all (containing knife, fork, spoon, comb, toothbrush, lather brush, shaving soap, and a razor made of tin, with "Made in England" stamped on the blade; when trying to shave with this it made you wish that you were at war with Patagonia, so that you could have a "hollow ground" stamped "Made in Germany"); then your housewife, button-cleaning outfit, consisting of a brass button stick, two stiff brushes, and a box of "Soldiers' Friend" paste; then a shoe brush and a box of dubbin, a writing pad, indelible pencil, envelopes and pay book, and personal belongings, such as a small mirror, a decent razor and a sheaf of unanswered letters and fags. In your haversack you carry your iron rations, meaning a tin of bully beef, four biscuits and a can containing tea, sugar and Oxo cubes; a couple of pipes and a pack of shag, a tin of rifle oil and a pull-through. Tommy generally carries the oil with his rations; it gives the cheese a sort of sardine taste.

Add to this a first aid-pouch and a long, ungainly rifle patterned after the Daniel Boone period, and you have an idea of a British soldier in Blighty.

Before leaving for France, this rifle is taken from him and he is issued with a Lee-Enfield short trench rifle and a ration bag.

In France he receives two gas helmets, a sheepskin coat, rubber mackintosh, steel helmet, two blankets, side a pier and disembarked. I had attained another one of my ambitions. I was "somewhere in France." We slept in the open that night on the side of the road. About six the next morning we were ordered to entrain. I looked around for the passenger coaches, but all I could see on the siding were cattle cars. We climbed into these. On the side of each car was a sign reading "Hommes 40, Chevaux 8." When we got inside of the cars, we thought that perhaps the sign painter had reversed the order of things. After 48 hours in these trucks we detrained at Rouen. At this place we went through an intensive training for ten days.

The training consisted of the rudiments of trench warfare. Trenches had been dug, with barbed wire entanglements, bombing saps, dugouts, observation posts and machine gun emplacements. We were given a smattering of trench cooking, sanitation, bomb throwing, reconnoitering, listening posts, constructing and repairing barbed wire, "carrying in"

The Author's Identification Disk.

parties, methods used in attack and defense, wiring parties, mass formation, and the procedure for poison-gas attacks.

On the tenth day we again met our friends "Hommes 40, Cheveaux 8." Thirty-six hours more of misery, and we arrived at the town of F——.

After unloading our rations and equipment, we lined up on the road in columns of fours waiting for the order to march.

A dull rumbling could be heard. The sun was shining. I turned to the man on my left and asked, "What's the noise, Bill?" He did not know, but his face was of a pea-green color. Jim, on my right, also did not know, but suggested that I "awsk" the sergeant.

Coming towards us was an old grizzled sergeant, properly fed up with the war, so I "awsked" him.

"Think it's going to rain, sergeant?" He looked at me in contempt, and grunted, "Cow's it a-goin' to rain with the bloomin' sun a-shinin'?" I looked guilty.

"Them's the guns up the line, me lad, and you'll get enough of 'em before you gets back to Blighty."

My knees seemed to wilt, and I squeaked out a weak "Oh!"

Then we started our march up to the line in ten-kilo treks. After the first day's march we arrived at our

Guy Empey.

rest. In France they call them rest billets, because while in them Tommy works seven days a week and on the eighth day of the week he is given twenty-four hours "on his own."

Our billet was a spacious affair, a large barn on the left side of the road which had one hundred entrances, ninety-nine for shells, rats, wind and rain, and the hundredth one for Tommy. I was tired out, and using my shrapnel-proof helmet (shrapnel proof until a piece of shrapnel hits it), or tin hat, for a pillow, lay down in the straw, and was soon fast asleep. I must have slept about two hours, when I awoke with a prickling sensation all over me. As I thought, the straw had worked through my uniform. I woke up the fellow lying on my left, who had been up the line before, and asked him:

"Does the straw bother you, Arry? It's worked through my uniform and I can't sleep.

In a sleepy voice he answered, "That ain't straw, them's cooties."

From that time on my friends the "cooties" were constantly with me.

"Cooties," or body lice, are the bane of Tommy's existence.

The aristocracy of the trenches very seldom call them "cooties," they speak of them as fleas.

To an American flea means a small insect armed with a bayonet, who is wont to jab it into you and then hobskip and jump to the next place to be attacked. There is an advantage in having fleas on you instead of "cooties" in that in one of his extended jumps said flea is liable to land on the fellow next you; he has the typical energy and push of the American, while the "cootie" has the bulldog tenacity of the Englishman; he holds on and consolidates or digs in until his meal is finished.

There is no way to get rid of them permanently. No matter how often you bathe, and that is not very often, or how many times you change your underwear, your friends the "cooties" are always in evidence. The billets are infested with them, especially so if there is straw on the floor.

I have taken a bath and put on brand-new underwear; in fact, a complete change of uniform, and then turned in for the night. The next morning my shirt would be full of them. It is a common sight to see eight or ten soldiers sitting under a tree with their shirts over their knees engaged in a "shirt hunt."

At night about half an hour before "lights out," you can see the Tommies grouped around a candle, trying, in its dim light, to rid their underwear of the vermin. A popular and very quick method is to take your shirt and drawers, and run the seams back and forward in the flame from a candle and burn them out. This practice is dangerous, because you are liable to burn holes in the garments if you are not careful.

Recruits generally sent to Blighty for a brand of insect powder advertised as "Good for body lice." The advertisement is quite right: the powder is good for "cooties"; they simply thrive on it.

The older men of our battalion were wiser and made scratchers out of wood. These were rubbed smooth with a bit of stone or sand to prevent splinters. They were about eighteen inches long, and Tommy guarantees that a scratcher of this length will reach any part of the body which may be attacked. Some of the fellows were lazy and only made their scratchers twelve inches, but many a night when on guard, looking over the top from the fire step of the front line trench, they would have given a thousand "quid" for the other six inches.

Once while we were in rest billet an Irish Husser regiment camped in an open field opposite our billet. After they had picked and fed their horses, a general shirt hunt took place. The troopers ignored the call "Dinner up," and kept on with their search for big game. They had a curious method of procedure. They hung their shirts over a hedge and beat them with their entrenching tool handles.

I asked one of them why they didn't pick them off by hand, and he answered, "We haven't had a bath for nine weeks or a change of clabber. If I tried to pick the 'cooties' off my shirt I would be here for duration of the war." After taking a close look at his shirt, I agreed with him: it was alive.

The greatest shock a recruit gets when he arrives at his battalion in France is to see the men engaged in a "cootie" hunt. With an air of contempt and disgust he avoids the company of the older men, until a couple of days later, in a torment of itching he also has to resort to a shirt hunt or spend many sleepless nights of misery. During these hunts there are lots of pertinent remarks bandied back and forth among the explorers, such as, "Say, Bill, I'll swap you two little ones for a big one," or, "I've got a black one here that looks like Kaiser Bill."

One sunny day in the front line trench, I saw three officers sitting outside of their dugout ("cooties are no respecters of rank; I have even noticed a suspicious uneasiness about a certain well-known general), one of them was a major, two of them were exploring their shirts, paying no attention to the occasional shells which passed overhead. The major was writing a letter; every now and then he would lay aside his writing-pad, scratch his shirt for a few minutes, get an inspiration, and then resume writing. At last he finished his letter and gave it to his "runner." I was curious to see whether he was writing to an insect firm, so when the runner passed me I engaged him in conversation and got a glimpse at the address on the envelope. It was addressed to Miss Alice Somebody, in London. "The runner" informed me that Miss Somebody was the major's sweetheart and that he wrote to her every day. Just imagine it, writing a love letter during a "cootie" hunt; but such is the creed of the trenches.

(To Be Continued.)

500,000 IN SECOND DRAFT

Plans for Calling Them Out Now Almost Complete.

Details of the plan for calling out the next 500,000 increment for the National army have become known in Washington on high official authority, says a correspondent.

The call will not be before May 1, and may be deferred to a later date, in order to leave undisturbed the farm labor class during corn and wheat planting seasons. The detailed plans for the next quota have received the approval of the secretary of war and will be in the hands of Provost Marshal General Crowder in a few days.

Directions for handling the men to be called to the colors in the second draft will be placed in the hands of the various local boards throughout the country in April with definite word to each board how many men must be selected week by week and the total number which much be supplied.

The greatest difference in detail between the first and second calls for the national army lies in the percentages of men to be sent to the camps and cantonments at various times. Under the first call definite percentages of the total number required were sent to camps. The plans for the second call contemplate sending men at the rate of about 10,000 a week if shipping conditions are such that the men already in the camps and trained can be moved to France at the rate, making room for the new men in the camps and cantonments.

It has been planned to call the second draft in sixteen increments as accommodations for their training becomes available. This was altered in order to keep the camps as nearly full to capacity as possible.

Calling 10,000 men a week will be increased as fast as possible, and it is hoped to more than double this rate eventually.

The men for the second increment will be chosen from among about 250,000 men—those now in Class 1, and about 1,000,000 youths who have reached the age of 21 years since registration last June. About half the candidates are expected to pass physically. The call to succeed the one in May is expected to be obtained from class 1, and from the boys who have come of age meanwhile.

The average number to be drawn from the territory covered by the jurisdiction of each of the 4,557 local boards is about 110, but the larger registration of aliens and others not in class 1 may make the quota from each district greater. If legislation now pending is adopted before the next call each district will be called for a definite percentage of the men in class 1 and who have reached 21 years of age since June 5 last.

American Losses First Month.—The first month of our occupation of the American sector northwest of Toul has cost less in casualties than had been expected. The total losses up to date are nineteen killed, sixty-six wounded and five missing.

Of the nineteen who gave their lives for their country, all but one were slain instantly by enemy bullets or shrapnel in the trenches or in No Man's Land. Only three of the wounded are recorded as having been in a critical condition, and they are now on the road to recovery. The rest are noted as "slightly wounded" in the official lists, but that does not mean their wounds are not both painful and serious.

Among the wounded are three officers. There are only two gas cases, neither of them grave. Five men set down as missing are presumed to be prisoners of the Germans. One was captured in a raid on a listening post on January 30, the others during an encounter with an enemy patrol on the night of February 8.

The casualties mentioned have reference only to the troops holding the American sector in the region of Toul and do not take into account the losses sustained elsewhere.

I have reason to believe that a considerably heavier toll of killed and wounded was expected during the first four weeks of our participation in the defense of the Allied battle front. A large percentage of the wounded have returned to their regiments already. Probably less than a dozen of those still in the hospital will be incapacitated permanently.

Rochelle, Ill., grocers have entered into a written contract to sell groceries for cash only.

SOLDIERING AT SEVIER

All Are Interested in the Big Task Ahead.

SOME ARE NOW STUDYING FRENCH

Incompetents Being Weeded Out Gradually—National Guardsmen Have Advantage of Draft Men in Length of Service; but Not Otherwise—No Feeling of Jealousy—All Appreciate the Task Ahead.

(Passed by the Censor.)

Correspondence The Yorkville Enquirer

Camp Sevier, S. C., February 20, 1918—Soldiers in training at Camp Sevier have been watching the newspapers with more than usual interest during the past week or so and it is a safe bet that newspaper sales in camp have of late been considerably on the increase. It is the Russian situation in which they are interested—interested because there is a growing impression that this Division may be sent over a little earlier than it otherwise would in order that it might help fill the hole in the lines caused by Russia's yellowism. When the newsboys come down into the roads between the mess halls and company streets each morning and afternoon they are met by scores of soldiers who have of late been saving a few nickles out of "the wreck" in order to buy a paper a day, and between breakfast and drill call and retreat and supper the majority of the men read the news of what is going on over there.

Private Sam Jones of "Anywhere, U. S. A. before I joined Old Man Sam's Army," as he expresses it, was airing his views on the Russian situation to a bunch of buck privates today:

"I been a thinking all the time," he said, "that them Roosians was a going to turn yellow. Their skins are yellow and they are yellow from tip to toe-nail naturally. I used to work among 'em in the coal mines of Pennsylvania and West Virginia and I speak like a man knowing what I am a talkin' about. I don't mind saying that I wish they had kept on in this thing on the side of us and the rest of God's folks; but I ain't never believed they would. There ain't no ending to this fracas nohow until we bullies get over there and plunge a knife or two into them Germans; and we have been waiting long enough."

The audience of "bucks" agreed.

Soldiers attending the schools for illiterates about which I wrote in an article a week or two ago, are making good progress from what I can learn. I am still writing an occasional letter to "Miss Nellie" for the soldier lad I told about; though I don't think the job will last much longer. He can write his name and even go better than that; but he isn't ready to venture a letter to his "brick dust blonde" as he calls her. If he keeps on progressing for another couple of weeks like he has during the past two, I am going to "pass the buck" to him—that is, I am going to inform him very kindly but firmly that it is time he was doing his own writing along with his courting. It doesn't take long for a soldier to learn a little thing like writing a letter in the army. Maybe it is because there are no holidays for the pupils and the teachers are not like the kind that used to tell me "It hurts me just as much to punish you as it hurts you."

Of course there are a few in this division attending schools for illiterates who have not learned anything and who will never learn because they are not capable of learning. They will be discharged from the service sooner or later. There seems to be no place in the front line trenches in this war for a man who doesn't possess at least the fundamentals of education. There never has been a war like this.

Speaking of discharges, men unfit for soldiering are being sent home every day and there are many yet to go. It is no easy matter to secure a discharge from the service even for those who really should be discharged and a man who is "yallow" and tries to get out because he is "yallow," hasn't a chance in the world. Every once in a while some fellow shoots off a foot or chops off a trigger finger or does some other stunt like that because he isn't a man. In nine cases out of ten he is discharged in order to take a place at Fort Leavenworth or Atlanta, instead of to return home. Three men have been discharged from my immediate company during the past few days and others are to go. Our progress would have been greater had they never been accepted for enlistment. One was suffering with an ulcerated stomach, another with pellagra and the third had a heart that threatened to strike any old minute.

The fellow suffering with pellagra—Cunningham was his name, had a hard time getting away. He was of very weak min' anyway and possessed of hardly enough intelligence to count money. When the order discharging him came around and settlement was made between him and Uncle Sam it was discovered that he had nothing coming to him, but instead was indebted to the government. He had no money, his parents were unable to provide him with funds and he was up against it for fair. He hung around a whole day because there was nothing else for him to do. Of course his comrades felt sorry for him in their rough way; but nobody felt sorry enough, to make him a present of $15, which is the price of a ticket to his home in the Tennessee hills. Several fellows informed him that if it were they instead of him who had the discharge, they would grab the first freight and out; but Cunningham couldn't see it that way or he was too timid.

Finally one of the men in the outfit gave him a dime and told him to go to the secretary of the Red Cross society in Greenville, present his discharge, tell his troubles and perhaps such a display of energy would be rewarded with a ticket to home. He took the dime and lit out. Several hours afterward officials of the Red Cross 'phoned out to know whether the story of Cunningham was on the level and when informed affirmatively, the lad was put on the train for home. If any of the officials of the Greenville organization chance to see this story they will learn for the first time how it was that they came to do a good turn for a soldier out of luck.

Many of the more ambitious and energetic among the soldiers in this division have begun the study of French. Classes have already or will begin in each regiment within a week or two, and the men who have signed up to take the course in their spare time, are determined to learn the language which will prove of such benefit and convenience if they do learn it. While of course it will be impossible to teach French to every American soldier who goes across, due to the fact that every minute is needed to teach them how to conquer the enemies of France, the hundreds who will learn it will serve as intrepreters and aids to the thousands who will not have the opportunity. Every officer and non-commissioned officer of this division at least, will have a smattering of the language before they join their French allies. Over there many soldiers expect to learn the language in the manner that Private Tom Wilson says he is going to learn: "When I get on the other side of the pond," he said a day or two ago, "I am going to lay for a duchess or a duke or whatever you call them French girls. An' I reckon she will have to learn me her lingo before she will savvy when I tell her what a good husband I would make." Yes, there are many fellows in this army here who declare they are going to stay in France for keeps when they do go over, and they always add that they are going to stay on top of the ground instead of under it. I have never yet heard a soldier suggest a presentment that Fritz is going to get him.

Being a draft man myself I am naturally more interested in them than I am in the other two classes who compose the great American army of today, viz., the National Guardsmen or volunteers as they prefer to be called, and the men of the regular army. From information I have been able to obtain from soldiers of more or less experience and of high and low station, and from my personal observation I am of the opinion that the drafted men, especially the first contingents—those who came into the army in September, are as good soldiers today and have as comprehensive a knowledge of the game of war as have the National Guardsmen, most of whom saw service on the Mexican border in 1916 and who have been members of the National Guard from one to three years. I am speaking of the private soldiers among the two classes. Here at Camp Sevier where there is a division composed of the National Guard regiments of North and South Carolina and Tennessee recruited to full war strength by drafted men, naturally most of the non-commissioned officers have been filled by National Guardsmen. They were here first and in accordance with the military rule of seniority were given the places of "non-coms." After four months of training, however, hundreds of drafted men here are competent for the same places and the National Guardsmen are never sure of their jobs. They have awakened to a realization of the fact that these farmer lads who left the plow a short while ago to take up the rifle have learned how to handle that rifle in remarkably quick time. A month or two ago I heard more than one non-commissioned officer say that "he didn't care much about his job because nobody else could hold it." I haven't heard that remark lately. There is no unseemly jealousy, between the two classes, as classes, or anything of that kind. All entertain about the same sentiment as to the task in hand—that is that it is up to them to stay the progress of the Hun. There are very few who think they are in the game for the sake of the game, or who care anything about it from that standpoint. All of them would rather be out of it than in it, or most of them would, but there are very few at Camp Sevier who would be willing to back out at present. They know what they are here for, and they have no idea of quitting until they have fulfilled their jobs.

Jas. D. Grist.

Quick Decision on Army Horses.—The February Farm and Fireside, in an article about the purchase of horses for the United States army, says:

"The decisions were made rapidly. The officer and the veterinary glanced at each animal's mouth, appraised his weight and height, and looked for defects—splints, spavin, ring bone, jack, bad eyes.

"'He's a good horse.' A seller was praising his goods. 'He'll last a long time.'

"'Yes,' said the officer quickly, 'he'll last a long time because no one will ever use him. Take him out.'

"The good-natured laugh that followed sobered to businesslike attention in a moment when the next horse was brought in.

"'All right. Back him up.' Then: 'Trot him a little.'

"A fine-looking bay had passed the preliminary inspection. A crack of the whip and he was trotted down the corral and back to the officers.

"'Artillery horse,' and he was led into an adjoining corral to be run a short distance as a wind test. Afterward he was tested for glanders, and the red government tag, telling his age, color, sex, weight, height and so on, was attached to his ear. That record of his history and purchase will follow him no matter how far he is sent or how long he remains in the service. Finally he was driven out into the larger corrals, and thence to a chute and into the branding pen. There he was marked U. S. with a big A underneath to signify that he was an artillery horse. Thus he became the property of the United States government."

Dr. John H. Keese of Ashland, Ky., remarked on a street car that "the kaiser would soon be king of the world—it is useless to oppose him," and started to sing "The Watch on the Rhine." Pretty soon he needed the services of a brother practitioner.

FOOD SITUATION CRITICAL

New England Is the Severest Sufferer.

RAILROADS ARE MOSTLY TO BLAME

Mr. Hoover Says that the Shortage is Very Great and that There Can Be But Little Hope of Relief for the Next Sixty Days—Much Corn Will be Lost.

The eastern part of the United States faces a food shortage likely to continue for the next sixty days.

In making this disclosure, Food Administrator Hoover declared that the situation is the most critical in the country's history and that in many of the large consuming areas reserve food stores are at the point of exhaustion.

The whole blame is put by the food administration on railroad congestion, which he says also has thrown the food administration far behind in its program for feeding the allies. The only solution he sees, is a greatly increased rail movement of foodstuffs even to the exclusion of much other commerce.

It is very evident that the railroad administration is inclined to resent Mr. Hoover's blame of the railroads, and Director General McAdoo declared he was ready to provide every transportation facility for expediting food movement. The railroad administration, he said, has suggested that farmers be urged to release their grain holdings that large numbers of available cars might be utilized in moving them.

Cereal Exports Behind.

Cereal exports to the allies, Mr. Hoover's statement says, will be 45,000,000 bushels short on March 1 and meat shipments also are far short of the amounts promised.

Inability to move the crops, Mr. Hoover sets forth, has suspended the law of supply and demand and has created a price margin between producer and consumer wider than it ever was before.

A large part of the corn crop is about to spoil because it is not moving to terminals for drying. The percentage of soft corn in last year's crop, all of which must be dried if it is to be saved, is the largest ever known. Estimates placed the amount as high as a billion bushels.

The cost of grains for feeding livestock has increased to such an extent by reason of transportation difficulties, Mr. Hoover says, that feeders are confronted with the prospect of serious losses. Dairying interests, too, he declares, are hard hit.

Potatoes, the food administrator declares, are spoiling in the producer's hands while consumers have been supplied only from summer garden crops and stores carried over.

Text of Hoover Statement.

Mr. Hoover's statement follows:

"In response to many inquiries, I beg to say it is true that since the first of December we have fallen far behind our agreed food program with the allies. By the end of February we will be short 45,000,000 bushels in cereal products which we undertook as our share of the supplies. We will also be short of the amount of meat and pork products that we were to deliver. This deficiency is due solely to the railway congestion since that date. The railway directorate since coming into control on January 1 has made effort to find remedy, but during the month of January the weather was insuperable and although progress has been made since the 5th of February, the situation is the accumulation of three months' delays.

"The next 60 days will be the most critical period in our food history. The simple fact is that the problem goes far deeper than supplies to the allies. During the last three months we have far fallen behind in movement of foodstuffs from the farms to the consuming and storage centers. Up to the first of February less than 50 per cent of the normal ratio of corn has been moved, less than 80 per cent of the oats and less than 50 per cent of the potatoes. From November 1 to January 1, we were short in the usual movement of grains and grain products into the terminals alone by over 120,000 carloads—over 120,000,000 bushels, and this further aggregated by similar shortage outside the terminals.

Next Sixty Days.

"Furthermore, this year we have the largest percentage of soft corn in many years and though we have a record crop of corn, a considerable portion of the soft corn will be lost by spoiling unless it can be moved in the next 60 days to the drying terminals. The least amount of grain that must be loaded for the next 60 days is 8,000,000 bushels per day—and we have not yet attained that. Less than this will solve neither the allied nor our domestic situation.

"We had about 130,000 carloads of potatoes on November 1 which should have been moved from the principal producing centers and up to the first of February we had moved about 28,000 carloads while we should have moved over 50,000 in this period. The result is that potatoes are piled up spoiling in the producers' hands and the consuming centers have only been supplied by virtue of the summer gardens and other stores carried over from last year. There is a great deal of livestock which has been ready for the market for sometime, but is still held in the farmers' hands through inability to secure transportation. These cattle are eating their heads off without increasing their meat value and are only adding to the costs of the farmer and consuming the grain.

Effect of Delay.

"The effect of this delayed movement has been many fold:

"First: To jeopardize the safety of a great deal of the soft corn and perishables, such as potatoes.

"Second: The stricture in flow of distribution has entirely distributed the price conditions in the country by practically suspending the law of supply and demand.

"Third: The cost of grains for feeding livestock has so increased to the feeders of finished cattle that they face serious losses. The costs of the dairying industries have necessarily greatly increased.

"Fourth: Through the large consuming areas we have been living off reserves through the period of scant supplies. These reserves are in many sections approaching exhaustion.

"Fifth: We have been unable to transport to seaboard the necessary foodstuffs for the allies.

Situation Critical.

"The economic ramifications of this whole delay in the movement of the national harvest are almost countless and they present the most critical of situations, of which no solution exists but a continued expansion of the efforts of the railway administration in the movement of foodstuffs in every direction to the exclusion of much other commerce.

"Comparisons of the movement from day to day during the last few days with movements of similar periods last year reflect the efforts being made by the railway directorate. We have, however, a long accumulation to be got over within the next 60 days. The situation calls for every co-operation of the public—through the quick loading of cars, loading them to capacity, and discharging them quickly—and in every way reducing the tax on the railways. Co-operation can be given by reduction in consumption of home and local stores to the exclusion so far as may be of transported articles. If every interest co-operates, we shall supply the allies and remedy the distribution of our abundant domestic supplies, for our farms are full of foodstuffs.

"No effort is being spared to move allied food as fast as it can be accumulated in the interior, and today the railway directorate is arranging special trains to carry meat and packing-house products from Chicago to load the waiting ships."

BRAINY, BUT——.

Being a Discussion of the Political Character of John L. McLaurin.

Greenville Piedmont.

A citizen of Lesslie, S. C., wrote a letter, recently published in the Greensboro, N. C., News over the nom de plume "Pedagogue." It dealt analytically and interestingly with South Carolina politics. Concerning McLaurin he wrote:

"McLaurin has brains. For sheer ability to think constructively no man in public life in South Carolina is his equal. He has the power to see the vision. His gray matter functions with wonderful precision, nor does it need the stimulus of other minds. He is no absorber of other men's ideas."

That is high praise, but even many who do not like McLaurin and would not vote for him to hold public office, will admit that it is a just estimate of Marlboro county's ablest son. The public debt of South Carolina could be paid and the state put on a cash basis if the people in the country who [illegible] dollar for each time somebody in this state has said: "McLaurin is the brainiest public man in South Carolina, but——"

And there is no use for him to say "But me no buts" for that "but" is like Banquo's ghost, it simply will not down.

"Pedagogue" further wrote: "McLaurine lacks something vital," and then proceeded to set forth at length his conception of what it is that McLaurin lacks. In short, his conception is that McLaurin was "too Republican" when serving in the United States senate. That is a grave charge—but, if it be investigated now, must not the confession be made that much which McLaurin favored then that was considered "Republican" is now openly supported by practically the whole Democratic party? For instance, McLaurin was roundly condemned for favoring developing an American merchant marine through government assistance. That was a case where he was right and the narrow-minded bigots who blackguarded him did not have vision. Suppose his advice had been taken at the time it was given, this country today would have had adequate shipping for its war needs at a small fraction of what will be the cost to the government of providing it now. Other counts in the indictment of McLaurin at the time he was denied the privilege of running in the Democratic primary for renomination for United States senator could be taken up and in the same way shown to be but inability of lesser minds to comprehend his wonderful foresight.

The Columbia State, which has always under its various editors had an unconquerable aversion to any politician who dared to think his own thoughts instead of accepting its conclusions as law and gospel, says the trouble with McLaurin is that he will not stay "hitched." That is but another way of expressing what "Pedagogue" charged, but The State was mighty glad that he did not stay hitched when his independence helped to put Joseph H. Earle in the United States senate instead of that John Gary Evans who in it so venomously denounced while he was governor and a candidate for senator but with whom it has of recent years worked in beautiful and touching harmony.

The trouble with McLaurin is that the habit of factional thought has become so fixed with most of us that we are incapable of appreciating the bigness of a man too big to be willing to wear the blind bridle of unquestioning and unswerving factionalism.

McLaurin has his faults, but niether "Pedagogue" nor the Columbia State has correctly diagnosed them. In reality, their indictments of him when examined by a man not blinded by partisanship are compliments.

Real individuality is so extremely rare that it is resented by the average man who does not possess it.

Clinto Gunton and Herman Meyers, clergymen, are held under $25,000 bail bonds at Elkins, W. Va., on charges of selling and distributing libelous and seditious matter regarding the United States. They carried Russian, German and other war maps, as well as the address of a concern where they could buy dynamite.

The recent earthquake shocks in the vicinity of Amoy, China, resulted in the death of 200 people. Most of the deaths were at Swatow. The number of injured has not been reported.